

Minutes
AGA SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, September 12, 2010 – 8:00 PM EDT

Meeting called to order by: Gordon Castanza at 8:03 PM EDT
Type of meeting: Regular Monthly Conference Call

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Lisa Scott (Central Region)
Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Gordon Castanza (Western Region, Acting Chairman)
Andrew Okun (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:

None

Guest:

Chris Garlock (e-Journal and Yearbook editor)

1. Approval of August 5, 2010 minutes

Okun made a motion to approve the minutes of the last monthly Board meeting from August 5, 2010 at the Congress. Robbins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Approval of August 22, 2010 Special Board Meeting minutes

Celmer made a motion to approve the minutes of the special Board meeting held August 22. Okun seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Annual Assembly Minutes

This will be done at the Assembly next year.

4. Call for additional agenda items and new business

- a. Lisa Scott wants to talk about her visits to central region go clubs and some new ideas she has gotten. 1) Igo-local, 2) contacting past and present members in a club's region, 3) a members section of the website, and 4) updating chapters on what the Board is doing.
- b. Okun would like to discuss forming Board Committees

5. Election of Board Chair

- a. Celmer nominated Andy Okun. Kolb seconded the motion. Okun accepted the nomination, but asked that since he has not been in charge of meetings operated under Robert's Rules of Order, he might need help following the rules. He asked that Board members tell him right away if he is unsure of the formalities. Robbins suggested that Castanza finish this meeting since he prepared the agenda. Okun agreed this would be a good idea and Castanza agreed to continue as acting Chairman. Castanza moved that the nominations be closed. Kolb seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of electing Okun as Chairman of the Board.

6. President's Report

a. Decision Item: FY2011 Budget

- i. Abramson said that he made savings in expenses of \$400 in international dues and Chris Garlock saved \$400 on the expected price of publishing software. If the Yearbook changes to a digital format, the budget for that will be reduced to \$2500 for production compared to \$15,000 last year. He now projects that the budget will be close to balanced and that the shortfalls will not be as bad as feared. He is now adding \$3000 for two e-journal reporters to travel to the World Amateur Go Championships
- ii. Abramson asked Chris Garlock to join the meeting to discuss his proposal to change to an electronic format for the AGA Yearbook next year.
- iii. Garlock said he hopes to have a .pdf document of Congress notes available shortly. He said even if there weren't budget constraints, he would be in favor of moving to a digital format because of improved color

pictures, the ability to click on links, the ability to scroll through games, and other enhanced content that is available in the digital format. Garlock's concern is that some members may perceive this decision as taking away the valuable product of a physical copy of the yearbook and replacing it with something less valuable, reducing the value of AGA membership. He thinks we need to communicate clearly what extra content will be available in the .pdf format for the yearbook to avoid that perception.

- iv.** One of the differences between the printed version and electronic version is that some people may not remember that they even received the .pdf version. Garlock wants to make sure that people notice and remember the Yearbook.
- v.** Abramson said he is working on drafting a statement to announce the changes to membership which lists the enhancements that will now be available. He will look to Garlock to help draft the statement.
- vi.** Scott said she brought this topic up in her discussions with chapters, and they have all been in favor of a more modern Yearbook.
- vii.** Okun said if we save money by not doing the printed version, we may spend some of the savings on something splashy. One idea is to offer a prize to people who enter a contest that can only be done through a link in the electronic yearbook.
- viii.** Robbins asked when this year's yearbook came out. Garlock said April. Robbins said he has been pushing this change as a budget issue, but he will miss the printed version more than most people.
- ix.** Garlock said the release date should be improved by at least a month if we move to an electronic version, because after he is done editing, it usually takes a full month to get it printed and mailed.
- x.** Garlock said there are big parts, like the Congress, the WAGC, and the Cotsen that take significant time to write, but the rest of it may be done as early as January.
- xi.** Garlock said it may be viable to offer an option to get a printed copy for a price. Okun suggested waiting to

announce that until there is a demand for it and until we are sure it is a viable option.

- xii.**Robbins said a netbook or i-Pad would make the Yearbook portable similar to a printed version.
- xiii.**Garlock said there is usually fear about changes being bad, but after the changes occur, people usually perceive the changes to be a good thing.
- xiv.**Jie Li said he thinks the electronic format is a good idea, because it will be on his computer and he can bring it with him when he travels. He said it's also good, because if he loses a copy, someone could just send him another copy. Li is concerned that non-members could get a copy without joining. Garlock said this is already an issue with the members' only version of the e-journal, and he has to assume people are honest and any pirating that takes place is like an advertising expense.
- xv.**Okun said if people value the .pdf version enough to pass it around, it is good publicity for the AGA. Robbins suggested telling members it does cost time and money to create the .pdf version and that they should encourage their friends to join to get it.
- xvi.**Garlock said he would like to know if anyone has heard negative reactions to the idea of an electronic yearbook from members.
- xvii.**Okun said he is not happy about the possibility of negative reactions, but the budget savings make it necessary. People who have a negative reaction will probably be few and even if they left, it would have to be more than 500 members lost to match the budget savings.
- xviii.**Scott says she has ideas to add value to members that if successful will wash away any negatives from a lack of a print version.
- xix.**Abramson said he would like to approve the budget tonight based on the new numbers he has proposed, assuming the move to an electronic yearbook.
- xx.**Castanza said he wants to discuss the high costs of the New York Office for the budget and make changes to reduce those costs to \$1,000.

- xxi. Abramson said we have to change the way we process credit cards if we are to reduce those costs.
- xxii. Robbins suggested reducing the administrative line item by 75% within 90 days. He has some ideas to reduce the budget to \$1250 for administrative costs. Castanza said he could live with the \$1250 for line item 60102, and to add the amount for John Hilt's programming. Abramson said he will work with Robbins to add buttons on the website to accept credit card payments directly. Robbins said it will probably cost \$300 to get the programming done. Abramson said he will change the number to \$1600 total.
- xxiii. Abramson asked if there are any other budget questions. Li asked about the \$65,000 deficit in the balance sheet. Abramson said that was an imaginary number. \$30000 was the advance to the Congress, \$25,000 was the loss of Ing money and the rest was the budget deficit.

Celmer made a motion to adopt the budget. Robbins seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously.

b. Information Item: VP-Operations

- i. Abramson announced the appointment of Andrew Jackson as the new Vice President for Operations. Abramson said he hopes this will help Chris Kirschner and himself accomplish more. Okun said he read the articles of incorporation and by-laws and said he thinks the Board may have to vote on the appointment. Abramson said there is ambiguity about that and he thinks he just needs to inform the Board of appointments. The Board needs to approve an Executive Vice President. Celmer said if there is a vote, there could never be any doubt that the appointment was legitimate.
- ii. Castanza asked for a motion to approve the appointment. Okun made the motion. Robbins seconded the motion. Kolb asked Abramson to tell us about Andrew Jackson and say why he chose him. Jackson ran for the Board and will co-direct the Santa Barbara Congress. Jackson

is a willing and able volunteer, and Abramson needs help, so he asked Jackson to join his team as a Vice President.

iii. The vote was unanimous to approve Jackson as Vice President for Operations.

c. Discussion item: Feng Yun's letter to the Chapters

i. Abramson said he has read through all of the e-mails in the thread started by Feng Yun's letter. There is a growing sense that people want to eliminate the ten-game requirement or replace it with something else.

ii. Abramson said the ten-game rule was adopted years ago for amateurs and it was extended to professionals last year. Abramson said he thinks the Board needs to address the issue with some statement.

iii. Robbins said he thinks there needs to be an extended discussion on this topic and he thinks a special meeting needs to be called to discuss the issue in depth.

iv. Okun asked that each member give a brief description of their position on the topic so we know whether a special meeting needs to be held.

v. Castanza said there is a lot of data-free analysis going around. People are just saying their perception of facts, without doing any research. Castanza asked 30 chapters their views. Only ten chapters responded. Seven were in favor of keeping the restrictions and three were not in favor. There were 16 non-chapter reps who responded. Only 1.5 percent of members have spoken on this.

vi. Scott said she has spoken to people from fifteen clubs, and most of them are in favor of modifying the rules. Two or three of the chapter reps she spoke to are in favor of keeping the ten game rule. Scott said even in Colorado, it can be hard to get ten rated games.

vii. Robbins said anyone who goes to the Congress can get the ten games in. Scott said some people can't go to the Congress. Robbins said if someone wants to go to international events, they need to prove that they deserve to go by putting some effort into their playing.

viii. Okun said he is against the ten game rule applying to professionals, because we could accomplish what we want to do without the restrictive rule by setting up qualifying events for representation.

- ix. Okun said Keith Arnold brought up the idea that if someone in the Los Angeles area has not been a continuous member, they will not be able to attempt to compete for international prizes. He wants to attract new strong members around Los Angeles to the Congress, and doesn't want to discourage them from attending by making them automatically ineligible for certain tournaments.
- x. Kolb said she thinks this meeting is going long and she would like to talk about this issue in a special meeting. Celmer said he also would like to have a special meeting. He has spoken to chapter reps in the east, and they generally are in favor of dropping the ten game requirement. They also want to start rating on-line games and create an American Professional system.
- xi. Jie Li said he doesn't think the ten-game rule should apply to the Ing Masters, because it is not an international event. He thinks that this rule puts Americans at a disadvantage compared to Canadians.
- xii. Li said reports of the controversial women's international tournament are not available on the website and asked why. Abramson said he is speaking to Dennis Wheeler and Edward Zhang to find out their sides of the story before reporting on the tournament.
- xiii. Garlock said nothing was removed from the website. Nothing has been posted yet and when it is available it will be posted.
- xiv. Abramson said in the interest of time, the Board should schedule a special meeting for next Sunday night. Scott said that is the same night as the Cotsen tournament, so it's not good.
- xv. **A special Board meeting will be held Wednesday, September 15 at 9:00 EDT to discuss the rules for tournament participation.**
- xvi. Okun said he will try to talk to Chapter representatives in his area before the meeting.

7. Old Business: 2011 Budget Proposal

- a. Covered under President's report

8. New Business

a. Members section of the Website

- i. Scott said this idea is popular with chapter representatives she has spoken to, and this should be a top priority for the AGA. People don't feel like they are getting enough for their membership dues, and adding a "members only" section of the AGA website would make people feel like they are getting a good value for their membership dollars.
- ii. Implementation of this idea should increase both membership and member satisfaction.
- iii. Robbins said this idea is important and it deserves discussion that he would like to be involved in, but he doesn't have time to discuss it tonight.
- iv. Okun said it will be discussed under recurring business at the next Board meeting

b. Updating Clubs on what the Board is doing

- i. Scott said keeping clubs informed about what the Board is doing will keep them more involved in the AGA.
- ii. Robbins said the entire minutes are available on the web. Scott said that people aren't aware of how to find them and they would like an overview without details to tell them the important decisions that were made.
- iii. Scott said she would like to send out an unofficial highlights summary quickly after the meetings before the minutes are approved a month later.

c. igo-local

- i. This website has been available for six weeks. It helps people find clubs and people to play face-to-face games. Scott suggests a permanent link to igo-local on the AGA website.

d. Helping Clubs get access to past and present member data

- i. Club organizers want to get names and addresses of members to contact to tell them about activities and clubs in their area. Scott doesn't want to release members' information, so she suggests allowing clubs to send information to the AGA to be forwarded to members and former members so they may be motivated to get involved with local clubs.

- ii. Scott said she will be typing a report of her findings and suggestions that she will send to the Board shortly.

e. Board Committees

- i. Okun would like to establish committees for Board members starting with a finance committee followed by a rules committee and a development committee. Abramson said there is already a rules committee headed by Terry Benson. Okun said he would like members of the Board to get involved with these issues.

9. Establish time and date of next meeting

The next regular monthly Board meeting will be October 17, 2010 at 8:00 EDT.

10. Adjourn

Okun made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary